

VZCZCXRO2183  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAK #0365/01 0511512  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 201512Z FEB 07 ZDK PER UR SVC 481  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1020  
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA  
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU  
INFO RUEHTOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU  
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION01 OF 03 ANKARA 000365

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2007

#### In Today's Papers

Prosecutions Continue Under Article 301  
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report Justice Minister Cemil Cicek said after Monday's council of ministers meeting that the proposals coming from NGOs for amending article 301 are "ambiguous and not helpful." Cicek noted that the provision could still be changed, however, "without touching its essence." Papers report that under the controversial Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which makes a crime "to insult Turkishness," some 12 people have been convicted in 21 months, while 18 court cases are continuing.

A complaint has been filed against Aydin Engin, writer for the Turkish-Armenian bilingual weekly paper Agos, for insulting Turkishness. The person who filed the complaint against Engin is the one who had also applied to the court for the prosecution of assassinated Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. Engin, a respected veteran journalist, said after being interrogated yesterday in Istanbul, "This investigation is a total disgrace. The situation is tragicomic -- at the moment, the Council of Ministers is discussing changes to Article 301, under which I'm being prosecuted." Meanwhile, a large group of Turkish intellectuals called for the complete abolition of the controversial article, saying "Article 301 is a threat to democracy, social peace and justice. Changes will bring no solution, it must be scrapped."

Turkish Military, Government Divided Over Iraqi Kurds  
Weekend papers, Sabah, Milliyet, Hurriyet and others: Last week in Washington, Chief of General Staff General Yasar Buyukanit accused two leading Iraqi Kurdish groups, the KDP and PUK, of providing full support to the PKK and ruled out any talks between them and his army. Two days prior to the Buyukanit comments, PM Erdogan had said that he could meet with Iraqi Kurdish leaders, if necessary. Following the Buyukanit comments, Foreign Minister Gul, prior to his departure for Saudi Arabia, said that "the Government has a duty to speak all groups in Northern Iraq to help ensure they make the right decision. Soldiers speak with weapons...but in order not to come to that point, politicians and diplomats must do their work too." Contact with the Kurdish Administration will now come onto the agenda after institutional coordination and full agreement has been obtained. The first step in this coordination will be taken at the National Security Council (NSC) meeting on February 23.

Meanwhile, Milliyet reports that Turkey's counterterrorism special envoy retired General Edip Baser told Haber Turk TV that Turkey does not have a Northern Iraq policy and that under current circumstances meeting with Kurdish leaders would be a distant possibility. Sabah reports that the staff assignments at the Prime Ministry's Counterterrorism office Baser had requested long ago were officially completed. Retired General Yasar Karagoz is assigned as deputy special envoy, and retired colonel Suat Karagollu is assigned to prepare reports to be submitted to the National Security Council.

Kimmit: Buyukanit Very Pleased with Washington Talks  
Columnist Cengiz Candar of the economic-political daily Referans reports Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near East and South Asia, Mark Kimmitt, told him at the "US-Muslim World Forum" talks in Doha that the Turkish military officials were "very pleased" with their talks in the US. Candar says: "Kimmitt, who participated in the meetings with Turkish General Staff (TGS) chief General Yasar Buyukanit, said the US took "very seriously" Turkish

concerns over the PKK. Philip Gordon, the National Security Council director for Europe under Clinton's presidency, said Kimmitt's words indicate that Washington has not given a green light to a Turkish cross-border military incursion into northern Iraq. ... No one with a bit of reason believes that a limited military operation of a few days will be enough to eliminate the PKK in northern Iraq -- as was the case in a 1990 Turkish military operation with 35,000 troops in

ANKARA 00000365 002.2 OF 003

cooperation with the Barzani and Talabani peshmerge, which continued for months without accomplishing its goal of destroying the terrorist organization."

Editorial Commentary on Iraq, Russia

Ilter Turkmen observes in the mass appeal Hurriyet: "Turkey's Iraq policy has some obvious contradictions. Ankara seems committed to the territorial integrity of Iraq yet insists on not inviting the symbol of this unity, President Talabani, to Turkey. As for the northern Iraqi administration, we insist on not keeping a channel for dialogue open with them even though they have full control over their region, unlike the central Baghdad authority. Realistically speaking, there is no point in making the Baghdad government our interlocutor for issues related to the PKK. The fact of the matter is that Baghdad's authority does not cover the north. And the US is not willing to take up the full responsibility by itself on this issue. Suspicion that the Kurdish leaders support the PKK should not be a reason for cutting off the dialogue. Haven't we talked with Syria for years despite their protection and sheltering of the PKK? On Iraq and other important issues, Turkey has failed to take initiatives and to come up with a creative policy. Domestic political concerns lead Turkey to think about a zero-risk approach and block Ankara from seeing the long term risks."

Soli Ozel comments in the mass appeal Sabah: "Russia has started making efforts to restore its pride, particularly after restoring its economic situation. With their imperial background, the Russian people continue to feel humiliated in the aftermath of the Soviet Union, and very much miss the days of Moscow being an important player in international politics. And in this regard, pursuing toward former Soviet Union game, but not enough yet to be a player in the new world order. Both the world and the international relations structure are in the process of being reshaped. Neither the US nor Russia has enough influence to impose their terms unilaterally in this process. Therefore, Putin's remarks about the US should not be interpreted as a sign of the return of a bi-polar world. This is basically one of the bargaining stages of a new world order."

New Poll on Turkish Attitudes

Hurriyet reported that a poll conducted by MetroPoll survey company showed that 57.3 percent of those surveyed said that current Prime Minister Erdogan should not become President; 72.5 percent had no idea what Article 301 was, 56 percent said that Turkey should launch cross border operations to Northern Iraq and 68.9.2 percent of people believed that the assassination of Hrant Dink was the act of an organized group, not an individual. In the poll 2,403 people in 27 provinces were surveyed.

Official Visitors from Iran and Iraq

Milliyet and AA: PM Erdogan met with Iran Islamic Consultative Assembly President Gholam Ali Haddad Adel yesterday. During the one hour meeting, they discussed bilateral and commercial relations as well as Iran's nuclear energy program. Erdogan urged Iran on the nuclear energy program to act with restraint and noted that he wishes the issue to be resolved through diplomacy. Meanwhile, AA announced that Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki will arrive in Ankara today and will meet with PM Erdogan, FM Gul and will attend Turkey-Ipo, Iraqi Vice President including President Sezer and Prime Minister Erdogan as well as

ANKARA 00000365 003 OF 003

Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and Kurdistan regional president Massoud Barzani to attend as Arinc came together with Turkey's armed Islamist leader, former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, at a funeral at Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara yesterday. Arinc kissed the hand of the veteran Islamist leader as a sign of respect while Erdogan shook hands and had a brief chat with Erbakan. Erbakan's Felicity Party (SP) is a strong critic of the ruling AKP government, accusing Erdogan and his friends of "treason" for parting ways with Milli Gorus, a Germany-based influential Islamist grouping formed by Erbakan decades ago.

TV Highlights  
NTV, 6.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- On Monday, Government Spokesman Cemil Cicek said Turkey will hold general elections in November as scheduled, echoing a statement by Prime Minister Erdogan late Sunday.

- Police conducted a search at the pro-Kurdish DTP offices in the eastern city of Van, seizing some documents of the outlawed PKK. Twenty DTP members have been detained.

- Economy Minister Ali Babacan said a new legislation governing mortgages will boost the housing market and lower interest rates, creating a second hand market in terms of residential properties.

#### International News

- Council of Europe Parliamentarians Assembly Speaker Rene van der Linden urged the EU to meet promises for lifting the sanctions on Turkish Cyprus.

- Greek Cypriot Foreign Minister Yorgo Lillikas said during a visit to Slovenia that Turkey must quit threatening its neighbors before joining the EU.

- Attacks across Iraq claimed 41 lives on Monday, including 5 US troops killed in Baghdad.

- Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Muhammad Ali Husayni said Tehran will not recognize the February 21 deadline set by the UN for a suspension of nuclear enrichment program.

- Syria's head of state Bashar Assad said after meeting with President Ahmadinejad that Damascus and Tehran should cooperate against the US-Israeli intentions.

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON